

8th Islamic Summit

MWL Memorandum to OIC Tehran Summit

Some Important Submissions to Muslim Leaders

THE Muslim World League, Makkah al-Mukarramah, which comprises eminent Muslim religious leaders scholars, community leaders and Islamic Dawah workers, sent an appeal to the Muslim heads of state and government assembled for their eighth summit meeting in Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran, during 9-11 Sha'aban 1418, corresponding to 9-11 December, 1997. The MWL Council was holding its biennial deliberations during that period in Makkah al-Mukarramah.

The statement issued from its headquarters, in Makkah al-Mukarramah, by League's Secretary-General Dr Abdullah Saleh al-Obeid, touched on several important issues and problems facing the Muslim Ummah together with an exposition of the Muslim people's standpoint relating to these problems.

Among the issues and problems raised in the MWL paper, the need for implementation of *Shariah* in all affairs of life by the Muslim rulers and leaders was the uppermost, as, according to the Secretary-General, the *Shariah* provisions constitute an invincible bulwark against all kinds of contemporary ideological onslaughts and political challenges facing the Muslim societies in the various regions of the world.

The application and enforcement of the *Shariah* in the life of Muslims, Dr Abdullah Saleh al-Obeid added, is a manifestation of compliance with the divine



MWL Secretary-General
DR Abdullah al-Obeid

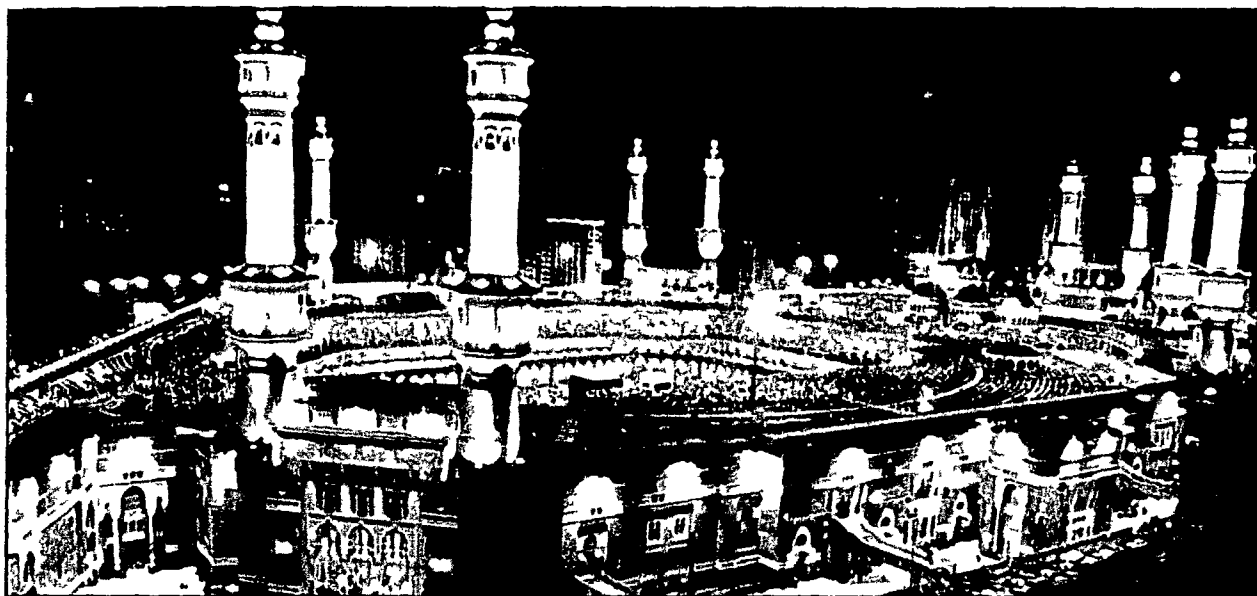
command which must be obeyed, if the Ummah and its rising generations are to be protected against all kinds of errors, deviations and weaknesses caused by subjugation to vain desires.

The MWL Secretary-General pointed out that, while closely watching the conditions surrounding Muslims, the Rabita has observed sagging enthusiasm trend among the followers of Islam in regard to applying and implementing the *Shariah* in certain Islamic countries and societies. The reasons for this are the application of man-made laws as well as the adoption of basic laws inherited from the colonial era, in the various aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life.

The bitter reality of the Muslim life today, manifested in the widespread disturbances, crimes and civil wars, the MWL Secretary-General pointed out, is but the consequence of the departure from the teachings of our religion. As such, Muslims, both the rulers and the masses at large, individuals as well as communities, must return to Allah's Sacred Book and the *Sunnah* of the Noble Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) if they wish to improve their conditions, and solve their problems either at the level of the individual or the society, for, this is the only way to regain the glory and the paramount position of the Ummah.

Concerning the burning Islamic issues, Dr Obeid said "The fact that Muslims are still facing a variety of burning problems, underlines the urgent need for

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The MWL views with serious concern the sagging enthusiasm for the application and implementation of Islamic Shariah among the followers of Islam

attaining complete solidarity and cooperation among the Islamic countries, as the only viable means to solve their problems, protect their interests and unite their ranks, in compliance with Allah's saying

And hold you fast to the rope of God and disperse not and (Verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher therefore serve me (and no other) Sura 21-Vrs 92

On the question of Al-Quds, Al-Aqsa and other Islamic sanctuaries in Palestine, the MWL Chief made it clear that, due to the religious as well as historical significance of Al-Quds, which houses the Aqsa Mosque the first Qibla and the third Holy Mosque for Muslims and the starting point of the nocturnal journey of our Noble Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), the issues related to Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa are the topmost problems which the Muslims must be tackled

"The Muslim World League has been closely following developments on the issue of Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa Mosque with profound concern and anguish. Israeli violations against Jerusalem persist, its sanctuaries and inhabitants, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque, are trampled upon as tunnels are dug under its very foundations settlements are built close to it, worshippers are harmed and prevented access to pray inside the Mosque, and endowment lands owned by it are expropriated in flagrant violation of all international covenants and resolutions that restrain Israel from effecting any changes in the territories occupied

in 1967, including Al-Quds," Dr Obeid observed

In this connection, the Secretary-General called upon the leaders of the Ummah to adopt decisive resolutions regarding the Israeli violations of the sanctity of Al-Aqsa killing of innocent worshippers and injuring the feelings of Muslims the world over by such measures allowing Jewish settlers to enter and defile the sanctity of the Mosque

The MWL Secretary-General also demanded of the leaders of the Ummah to stand up against Israeli attempts to persuade foreign diplomatic missions to transfer their legations to Al-Quds, under the pretext that the city is the eternal capital of Israel

The Muslim World League Secretary-General, in this connection commended the efforts of the Al-Quds committee of the OIC, which is headed by King Hassan the Second of Morocco, in insisting on the Arab and Islamic origin of Al-Quds and in demanding its return to its rightful Arab and Muslim owners

"The peoples of the Muslim world expect the eighth summit conference, to extend every possible support to the Al-Quds committee, and to adopt practical resolutions regarding the return of the Holy City to the Arabs and the Muslims," Dr Obeid stressed

On internal conflicts in countries like Afghanistan and Somalia, the League Secretary-General said "The ongoing events in these two Islamic countries fill our hearts with grief and deep regret over con-

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tinuing bloodshed in the two countries. We appeal to the Islamic leaders assembled in Tehran, adopt an appropriate strategy in order to end the conflict, save innocent lives, and reintroduce dialogue, so as to secure peace and security in the two countries. Muslims must not expect and benefit from any internal conflict among them, on the contrary the benefit if any of any such conflicts go to the enemies and adversaries of Islam."

The League Secretary-General praised the Organisation of the Islamic Conference for the commendable efforts being exerted by its contact committees to resolve these conflicts by encouraging dialogue between the conflicting factions in the two countries, and appealed to the leaders of the Ummah to lend wholehearted support to these efforts so that peace and security could be restored both in Somalia and Afghanistan.

On the bloody tragedy in occupied Kashmir and the persecution of Muslims in that unfortunate land, the Muslim World League Chief recalled the fact that, as far back as 1948 the United Nations Organisation had passed a number of resolutions which called for self-determination for the people of Kashmir through a plebiscite but these resolutions are yet to be implemented.

The League Secretary-General therefore urged the leaders of the Ummah to examine the predicament of this hapless people, extend material and moral support to them and project their causes at the international gatherings in order to secure freedom and independence for the people of Kashmir and rescue them from their plight.

With regard to the conditions of the people of Chechnya and those of Bosnia-Herzegovina the MWL Secretary-General stressed the urgent need to render necessary aid and assistance to them to enable them reconstruct their countries ravaged by the war which has destroyed their whole infrastructure. The war also damaged heavily or damaged Mosques and ruined the educational, cultural and religious institutions. Islamic schools and institutes have either been destroyed or badly affected by the war. A huge and massive rehabilitation and reconstruction plan is, therefore, urgently called for in regard to the two devastated countries.

The League Secretary-General commended the government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz for its humanitarian policies on Chechen and Bosnian issues and recalled the Saudi role in rushing relief materials and

supplies to the two countries right from the early days of the war. The MWL Chief also lauded the sympathetic stance of the Organisation of Islamic Conference on the two issues and called for the continuation of Islamic efforts in support of our Muslim brothers in both countries at all levels.

Dr Abdullah al-Obeid referred to the Muslim blood that is being spilt unjustly in some Muslim countries, especially in Algeria where violence and counter violence have led to bloodshed, which Islam disapproves of in all its forms. It completely Islam forbids shedding of Muslim blood, as is evident by the historic farewell sermon of our Noble Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) in which he firmly established the sanctity of the Muslim life and property. Dr Obeid called on the 8th Islamic Summit to adopt measures that will put an end to the massacre and the senseless shedding of the Muslim blood in Algeria which will bring peace and stability to that country and its population.

Regarding the events on the international scene concerning Islam and Muslims the Muslim World League Secretary-General said in its appeal that Islam is now being subjected to hostile media propaganda and a new kind of cultural warfare against its teachings, laws and ideology in raging in full force. It added that there are some malicious anti-Islamic quarters that have worked and are working to distort the image of Islam so as to spread hatred among the Muslim masses and other people vis-a-vis the Islamic *Shariah*.

Dr Obeid went on to say the anti-Islamic quarters are trying to picture Islam as the enemy of the West after the collapse of Communism totally ignoring tolerant nature and the humanitarian message that it brought to secure the happiness of mankind on earth.

The MWL Secretary-General called on Muslim leaders to study this important issue and take necessary action for a joint Islamic work-plan in defence of Islam by correcting its distorted image and presenting its principles in their correct form and inviting world to study Islam its legal system and its attitude towards human rights guaranteed by Islam.

Dr Obeid added that the Muslim World League, which firmly upholds the principle of cooperation with Islamic governments in the interest of Islam and Muslims is ready to help in implementing the resolutions the Muslim peoples are expecting from the Islamic Summit aimed at defending Islam and correcting its distorted image by introducing it to mankind in their correct form.

Islam's Call to Begin Reform from Within

Dr Abdul Qader Tash

THE voice of Saudi Arabia heard in the conference hall of the Eighth Islamic Summit in Tehran stood out from the rest—both in the vision it conveyed and the style in which it was presented

Crown Prince Abdullah, Deputy Premier and Commander of the National Guard, gave a clear picture of the Saudi perception of how the issues and concerns of the Ummah are to be addressed

The contemporary Islamic discourse in most cases we all know, is characterized by what can be called "external dimensions" — meaning, our speakers or writers put the blame for our backwardness and suffering on others. A liberal use of such terms as "conspiracies," "plots" and "intrigues" of an external enemy is supposed to explain all our ills

Of course, to say this is not to claim that there are no conspiracies or plots. There are enemies who hatch evil schemes to realize their interests harming that of Muslims. There are also those who infiltrate our ranks and cause conflicts among us. However, how do they succeed in harming us? The problem lies in ourselves, more than in our enemies

That is why Prince Abdullah reminded us that Islamic discourse

should turn toward 'the inside' rather than "the outside." The cause is more internal than external. 'Plotting against Islam has been going on since ancient times without interruption and is not likely to cease, either at present or in the future,' he said. 'But it is time now to blame ourselves be-

fore pointing the finger of accusation at others. A sound healthy body will remain too strong to succumb to alien pests. How ferocious their attack may be, whereas the body that is torn apart or worn out from within will be an easy prey to the attacks of foes and the intrigues of the vindictive.'



"Many questions arise in Muslim countries, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, about the heinous crimes being committed in the name of Islam and under the pretext of creating an Islamic form of government. Are these killers — who slit the throats of their victims, cut their limbs and mutilate their bodies — to be trusted? Are they qualified to create an Islamic state?"

What is wanted is a rearrangement of the Islamic house from within. Without such self-criticism and rearrangement of priorities no attempt at reform will achieve success.

The Crown Prince presented a number of examples of the diseases in the Islamic body, hoping that Muslims would begin the process of cure by treating themselves. Among the most pronounced of them he said, was that of conflict, discord and disunion. Many Muslims do not differentiate between discord and difference of opinion.

Discord, as pointed out by Prince Abdullah, is 'one of Allah's means of dealing on earth. Yet discord among Muslims over discretionary matters or over political affairs must not go beyond its limited scope as a natural problem which can be dealt with wisely, quietly and patiently. It must not be allowed to acquire bloody dimensions that would destroy everything.

'It is not in the nature of things for all Muslims to arrive at a single interpretation of how the Islamic state should look like, or a common approach to our Islamic jurisprudence or a single concept of international politics. Nevertheless, we are duty-bound not to transfer such legitimate diversions of opinion into a pretext for hegemony by which each of us may try to dictate to his Muslim brother how to think and how to work.

"If there is one single lesson which I consider to be the most important in the entire history of



mankind, it is the indisputable fact that any attempt of hegemony has always ended in a bitter struggle in which there was neither a victor nor a vanquished, but there were

victims on both sides who pay the price with their own lives.

"It is perhaps our own region that has suffered from this distorted logic more than any other area in the world. The effects of this suffering are evident everywhere—so sharply focused and bitter."

This emphasizes the truth that the inability of Muslims to differentiate between unhealthy discord which is harmful and healthy difference of opinion, which is a sign of thinking minds shows an extremely dangerous intellectual flaw which might lead to utter ruin. Were those the 'enemies of Islam' who forced us to follow this destructive path? Or were it our own mean intentions and immature political logic that pushed us down this death trap?

Another of the diseases is man-



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"In some Muslim countries, many Muslims are bereft of even the basic human rights. It is difficult for non-Muslims to believe that Islam is really the religion of knowledge and science, the religion which urges its votaries to travel far and wide in quest of knowledge and science, as long as they see how the Muslims themselves stand so far from science, so suspicious of it, and how they are, at best, only willing to import its products for their own consumption, oblivious of the potential danger posed by circumstances and conditions."

ifested in the contradiction between words and deeds. They claim, and rightly so, that Islam is a great religion, which would ensure man the dignity and comfort he longs for in life. Yet all too often in their social and political behaviour they disregard the laws of Islam governing those matters.

The Crown Prince said "As we invite others to the way of Allah, we should never lose sight of the fact that deeds speak louder than words. A Muslim's conduct is a mirror, which reflects his religion. He makes his religion more appealing to others by committing himself to amity, piety and tolerance."

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And the Prince continues. Thus it is obvious that words will be of no avail unless they are accompanied by good deeds, and unless each Islamic

society is transformed into a mirror, which reflects the majesty, perfection and sublimity of Islam."

Prince Abdullah gives a number of examples to show that the major problems of Muslims are their own handiwork, not of others. Muslims today know very well that the strength of nations lies in their unity and in their ability to come together in unions or blocs to maximize the benefits of pooled resources and shared benefits. And yet they do nothing to achieve such an end. The Islamic Ummah is pulled back and forth by 100 banners, torn apart by 100 slogans and pulled in different directions by 100 conflicting political stances.



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indisputable fact that any attempt of hegemony has always ended in a bitter struggle in which there was neither a victor nor a vanquished, but there were victims on both sides who pay the price with their own lives.

It is perhaps our own region that has suffered from this distorted logic more than any other area in the world. The effects of this suffering are evident everywhere—so sharply focused and bitter."

This state of disunity, as the Prince points out, runs counter to the most distinctive characteristics of the present age, namely the inability of smaller entities to wield an influence in our international contemporary society wherein the trend is for such smaller entities to unite or merge together to form more powerful and efficient units."

The Prince adds "When achieved, Islamic unity would be capable of forging Muslim peoples and countries in one powerful bloc, which would enjoy so much influence in the international arena by virtue of its abundant resources and potentialities. It takes more than dreams and pious wishes for such a historic achievement to be accomplished."

"There will be need for the adoption of scientific approach, assigning to each stage a set of realistic and practical targets. Work on implementing these targets will gradually gain momentum as things begin to improve and with the growth of confidence and the elimination of doubts and vain thoughts."

Is not the Ummah capable of transforming its faith in unity into reality or does it expect others to realize this unity for it and impose unity on it by force? This unity is not "an impossible goal or "wishful thinking." It is — as the Prince points out — a legitimate demand which we will be capable of transforming into "a tangible reality," but with one condition. We must put the interest of the whole before that of the part and strive jointly to make the Word of Allah, not that of any one of us, supreme. This should prove to be not too difficult a task for the devoted believers to achieve. Allah, Most High, says *Verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah and I am your Lord*

and Cherishes therefore serve Me
(and no others)

When the Muslims feel that the message of Islam is one that encourages people to get acquainted with one another one that promotes dialogue and one that directs people to be gentle and polite when engaged in an argument, then they have to keep communicating with the entire world, as they cannot afford to live in isolation at a time of fast communications

The Prince continues There is no longer a place in the world that is isolated and basking in the warmth of its isolation Peoples from far-off parts of the world have become close neighbours by Allah's Grace and then by virtue of science Man has become neighbour to man in his shortcomings and assets In the light of this fact, the humanitarian virtue of Islam should be displayed to benefit the entire modern world In his behaviour a Muslim should be the paragon of a civilized specimen, who abhors barbarity, savagery chaos and militancy

Then, the Prince turns to a painful aspect which needs to be spoken of with clarity and force – terrorism in the name of Islam It hurts us and distorts the image of Islam, and thereby, those responsible for it render invaluable service to its enemies

Prince Abdullah says "Many questions arise in Muslim countries, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia about the heinous crimes being committed in the name of Islam and under the pretext of creating an Islamic form of government Are these killers – who slit the throats of their victims, cut their limbs and mutilate their bodies – to be trusted? Are they qualified to create an Islamic state?"

The problem is not only the presence of this perverse phenomenon in some of our societies It is also the suspicious silence about it and the lenient attitude toward those, who are responsible for the acts That is why the Saudi voice rose high at an international gathering where the leaders and representatives of some 55 Muslim countries were present with



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accompanied by good deeds, and unless each Islamic society is transformed into a mirror, which reflects the majesty, perfection and sublimity of Islam. The Islamic Ummah is pulled back and forth by 100 banners, torn apart by 100 slogans and pulled in different directions by 100 conflicting political stances. This state of disunity runs counter to the most distinctive characteristics of the present age, namely, the inability of smaller entities to wield an influence in our international contemporary society wherein the trend is for such smaller entities to unite or merge together to form more powerful and efficient units."

the question 'Why do Arab and Muslim worlds keep silent with regard to what is going on?' Islam, the religion of mercy, justice, tolerance and honouring of promises and pledges is innocent of any action that is mean and inhuman

Addressing the leaders of the Muslim countries, the Prince says

Well, brothers, we bring to your attention these questions, which have been bothering the Muslim more than anybody else and have bewildered him a great deal If my honourable brothers appreciate the idea of providing answers to these questions we may then proceed to tell the world that the role of Islam is to establish justice among human beings

"You may perhaps consider the issuance of a message of consolation by this conference addressed to the families of the victims accompanied by a declaration solemnly made before Allah the Most High and before the entire world disowning and repudiating any action that is savage, barbaric immoral and loathsome to the ideals of Islam its sense of justice and its orientation"

This address in which Prince Abdullah presented the Saudi vision, is new in its perspective and content and different from the addresses commonly heard these days The speech did not come from a vacuum It is the natural extension of the address of Islam in its pure fundamentals and its benevolent trends

The Holy Qur'an has always guided us to the fact that the reform of self is the basis and that it is His eternal law that *Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves*

Tehran Summit Underscores Reality of Unity Without Uniformity

Amir Taheri

THE key-word that emerges from the eighth summit of the Islamic states, which completed its work in Tehran, on 11 December 1997, is Realism. For the first time in years the Muslim countries showed that although they might not like each other's political set-ups, they can learn to live with one another.

The summit achieved a modest success because all participants went for the lowest common denominator: says a senior Asian diplomat who attended the Tehran gathering 'There was no question of all or nothing. We looked for areas where there could be agreement.'

The summit revealed the Muslim world as a kaleidoscope of many different regimes with divergent economic and political systems. There are monarchies and republics. There are states structured around a powerful military. There are other states that have developed something closely resembling the Western pluralist system. In at least half a dozen states, the dominant system includes a strong dose of theological philosophy.

Among the countries represented in Tehran were some of the world's poorest nations with per capita incomes of under \$500 a year. But there were also some of the world's richest with per capita

incomes reaching \$2,500 a year.

The diversity showed in Tehran must have made it clear to ideologues of all shades that it is impossible to impose a single political system on so many different states scattered over Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

To further emphasize the diversity, delegates representing Muslim communities in North America and Western Europe were also present as observes Islam is a truly global religion, that does not admit of any ideological or geopolitical straitjacket.

The summit showed that there could be no pariahs. Iraq has made it back into the fold despite the fact that most member nations are still reluctant to touch President Saddam Hussein's regime with a long pole.

Despite their diversity the Muslim countries have many points in common. All of them are still looking for ways and means of coming to terms with a world system essentially created by the West.

In this context, three attitudes can be observed. There are those who believe that the best way is full Westernization. The motto is 'If you cannot beat them, join them!' The Turkish experiment of the past eight decades falls into this category as does the endeavors of many smaller Muslim

states, such as Tunisia and Senegal. In most cases however, the central feature of the Western system, that is to say changes of governments through free elections, is not accepted even by the most ardent Westernizers.

The second attitude is that of those who believe they can reinvent the world or failing that, shut themselves behind ideological walls and fight the rest of mankind through fiery words and bombs placed here and there. This attitude still has strong supporters within some countries.

The third attitude is summed up in the idea of 'change without loss of identity'. The idea is that the Muslim countries can and must be active participants in international life and make their own contribution to the well-being of mankind as a whole. It is impossible to ignore, let alone, violate values that have attained universal status. But there is no reason why Muslims should not develop their societies on the basis of values, freely accepted and cherished by their citizens. Malaysia has been the most outspoken advocate of this option.

What was encouraging in Tehran was that almost all delegations showed that they understand the reality of unity without uniformity. There was none of the classical set-piece speeches in which a black-and-white vision of the world is presented in order to



Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard and Prince Saud al Faisal Foreign Minister at the opening session of the OIC summit in Tehran

make demons of imagined enemies and transform even more imaginary friends into good guys

The end of the Cold War and the start of the peace process in the Middle East, its obvious problems notwithstanding have contributed to the atmosphere of realism witnessed in Tehran. The Manichean view of intentional life is no longer attractive or sustainable. People have to live together and, in most cases, even work together even if they do not like one another.

The Tehran summit showed that differences of opinion need not lead to diplomatic tussle or political feud or even all-out military conflict. It may sound naively optimistic, but it is clear that ideas promoted through violence, terrorism or war have failed to score a single success.

The need for a change of methods is recognized by all. This means a battle of ideas that is conducted through debate and discussion rather than propaganda, terror or sabre-rattling.

There was a healthy distaste for cheap demagoguery. Even the

issue of Palestine and Jerusalem always sure to draw cheers, was not abused for easy effect. The future of Jerusalem and the need for an independent Palestinian state remain key concerns of the Muslim world and are probably the only subjects to produce unanimity. But it is clear that there is a consensus on tackling those issues in a mood of realism.

Tehran also showed a rejection of terrorism. Several radical groups, that use violence, had sought invitation to Tehran. None were invited. Invitations went out only to those Muslim movements, that are fighting regimes guilty of violating Muslim rights.

The Muslim states have far more in common than divides them. Most of them face a tremendous demographic problem with people aged below 25 accounting for 60 percent of total populations. This means a fantastic demand for health, education, leisure and productive jobs. That, in turn puts the need for economic development at the centre of popular preoccupation. The test of a government's success is not

the fiery tone of its broadcast or the poetry of speeches made by its leader. The real test is in the number of jobs created and in the economic growth rates achieved.

According to a senior Asian delegate to the summit, most participants agreed that attention should in future be focused on economic, technological and related issues. 'The Muslim countries realize that they are missing the boat as far as economic development is concerned,' he says. 'Since 1980 the Western economies have increased their gross domestic products by over 100 percent on the average.'

The average growth rate for the Muslim world has been around 3 percent which is cancelled by the rise in population. Even the richest of the Muslim states are poorer now than they were a decade and a half ago.

Many Muslim countries know that they need to industrialize in order to create the jobs they need. But how could their infant industries compete against well-established Western and Asian giants in a global market? The answer might be found in efforts to increase commercial exchanges within the Muslim world. But that would require an end to efforts to undermine one another's political systems through propaganda and support for violent groups.

Many speakers at the Tehran summit devoted time and space to economic issues. This is why the next summit, in three years' time is likely to emerge as an essentially economic summit, designed to help the member states pool their resources, wherever possible while opening their markets to each other's products and services.

Courtesy Arab News, Jeddah, 12 December, 1997

Features

A Two-Day Conference in Amman

Islamophobia: Motives and Goals

Amer Obeid

MWL Office, Amman

CROWN Prince Hassan bin Talal of Jordan has described as extremely important a meeting of Muslim parliamentarians from all over the world to discuss, among other measures the establishment of a body to deal with the widespread fear of Islam or what is termed as Islamophobia

Addressing a meeting recently held in Amman Jordan, Prince Hassan rejected the misrepresentation of Islam as an alien phenomenon and urged more efforts by the followers of the monotheistic religions to identify their shared values Earlier, the Prince proposed the establishment of a council for the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) to take notice of and counter anti-Islamic propaganda He pointed out the contradiction of promoting an Islamic threat when over 75 per cent of the world refugee population is Muslim

Officials from parliamentary organisations like the IPU coming from Canada Denmark Great Britain, Iceland Germany France Belgium, Portugal and Spain agreed on the need of setting up a body to meet and dispel the threat of Islamophobia

In a related statement, the Canadian Senator, Mr Maskeel Broadhome said that one of the key factors behind the widespread fear of Islam was the failure of

solving the Palestinian cause Fifty years ago, he elaborated, the United Nations issued the resolution No 181 stating the need of setting up two separate states in Palestine The West along with the international body pledged the support to the implementation of that project but nothing so far had been done in that respect, generating despair and helplessness among the oppressed people

He squarely blamed the policies followed by the successive Israeli governments for the deterioration of the situation, resulting in more violent reactions on the part of the Arabs Confusion often happens when accusations are directed against Islam as being the cause of the tension The people of the United States of America, for example view Egypt as the biggest Muslim country They have forget Indonesia which has about two hundred million Muslims

Mr Broadhome apparently wanted to say that the wave of the Islamophobia is often related to the developments of the Arab-Israeli conflict, instead of being the result of a lack of understanding of the true principles of the Islamic religion He urged more dialogue for widening the scope of the mutual understanding as this would remove pre-judices towards other beliefs

Mr Kamil al-Sharif a Jor-

danian senator, and a leading Muslim intellectual, summed up in a working paper for the meeting a series of idea to be taken into consideration for an inter-faith dialogue While discussing some of the factors, which have contributed to the present tension between the followers of various religions, he mentioned the following points

- * The biased literature which include books and articles by prominent Western scholars like Professors Samuel Huntington and Francis Fukuyama, warning against the revival of Islam as a menace to the Western civilisation,
- * Statements by among others, the former British Premier, Margaret Thatcher and the former Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) warning against the potential "danger" of Islam,
- * Propaganda against the Islamic cultural values like what had been done to the "veil" issue in France three years ago,
- * Extreme kind of xenophobia against the expatriates in Western countries especially the Muslim immigrants,
- * Harassment and physical liquidation perpetrated against the Muslims in the West,
- * Hasty and baseless accusations against Islam and its followers in the wake of any violent in-

Features



Israeli policies are to blame for the explosive situation and tension in the Middle-East. In this picture Palestinians celebrate with the destruction of a model Israeli settlement during a rally on 25 December 1997 marking the second anniversary of the death of a Hamas leader Yahya Ayyash. Ayyash, otherwise known as Engineer, was killed by the Israeli agents in Gaza.

atically been associated with what is happening in Palestine and Algeria in spite of their being totally different instances

- * Muslims are often linked to a series of bad habits like the lack of discipline, accord and unity of aim
- * Muslims are portrayed as strongly opposing the Western culture and all its manifestations

In the light of the afore-mentioned accusations one has to draw the attention of those confused about the fundamentals

cident which may take place somewhere in the world

- * Unfounded fear of the probability of production by a Muslim country of the so-called Islamic nuclear bomb vis-a-vis the display of remarkable leniency towards the more-advanced nuclear programmes of India and Israel

Other charges which are unjustly levelled against the Islamic faith are

- * Islam is a rigid religion rejecting the concepts of progress and development and also belittling other religions
- * Islam encourages autocracies and refuses the democratic sys-

tems and multi party rule

- * Islam persecutes women and deprives them of their basic rights in matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance. It also allows polygamy
- * Discrimination against and unfair treatment of the followers of other religions especially the Christians and Jews living in the Muslim countries
- * The legitimate fight for self-defence is often misrepresented as a 'holy war' against the non-Muslims
- * Muslims are instinctively inclined to practise terrorism and killing for no strong reasons. This accusation has system-

of Islam to the following facts

- * Islam shows due respect to other faiths and enjoins its adherents to avoid confrontation. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the first to set an example when he started holding dialogues with the Christians and Jews
- * These peace-seeking contacts had been resumed by Muslim rulers in later periods including those of the Umayyads and Abbasids when Islam was in its heyday
- * Unfortunately these peaceful initiatives on the part of the Muslims, were strongly rebuffed by the other side in various forms,

Features.

including provocative propaganda and military offensives. These hostile attitudes actually contributed to more escalation in form of the military confrontation and campaign of distortion of Islam.

Some minor mistakes and shortcomings of the Muslims were magnified and elaborately presented in the classical literature which largely contributed to the process of shaping up the collective memory of the Western communities.

The tension between the two sides was caused to be inflamed by a series of incidents and factors like the following ones:

- * The military expeditions of the crusaders against the Muslim territories and the destruction and blood-shedding caused by them and the subsequent Ottoman advances through the European countries.
- * Western imperialism and the accompanying evangelism and orientalism against the Muslim traditions,
- * The imperialism's aggressive stand towards Islam and its adverse effects on the intellectual structure of the Muslims societies.
- * The close link between the imperialistic politics and the present state of backwardness of the Muslim world, and the consequent conflict between the pro-Islam camp and that of the secularists.

Negative Impact

The policy of confrontation which had often been espoused with anti-Islam onslaughts certainly produced harmful developments against the principle of co-operation between the Muslims, especially those who are living in

Western countries, and the West. One can sum-up these unfavourable factors as the following:

- * Unfair seclusion of the Muslim masses who represent a good percentage of the world population and possess large portion of its resources. This unfortunately happens when calls are being made for full regard to human rights and freedom,
- * Weakening the stand of the moderate Islamists vis-a-vis the extremists.
- * Allowing hurdles to block the way of free movement of the world races and, accordingly, hampering the process of interaction and mutual communications as a prelude to the achievement of the keenly sought universal culture.
- * Depriving the host Western countries of the creative faculties and skills of the immigrant Muslims.
- * Setting up a wide background for further chaos and the state of anarchy which will naturally lead to deterioration or probably break down of the bilateral and international relations,
- * Sturring the almost dormant historical animosities which have presumably withdrawn into the world of limbo in this period of speedy transportation and revolution in the field of information exchange.

Positive Initiatives

Positive initiatives for the purpose of realising closer rapprochement have been taken up in the recent period. Among these are,

- * The second meeting of the Nicene Council in 1963 which proposed in its final statement that a new method for under-

standing Islam had to be followed.

- * The inter faith dialogue on various levels, which has so far led to a better understanding and appreciation of Islam also encouraged the co-operation in various aspects of service to humanity particularly in protecting the family system, fighting alcoholism and drugs abuse and the conservation of nature and environment,
- * Upgrading the level of the joint work of the charitable organisation in a bid to extend aid and relief to the needy people regardless of their race, nationality or religion.
- * The mutual desire for rewriting the history in a way which avoids the distortion or the provocative notes.
- * Allowing religious classes to be conducted for Muslims in some Western countries, like Germany and Canada and others.
- * Increasing inclination of some churches to halt the evangelic activities in the Muslim world and to be replaced by programmes propagating the principles of Christianity among its adherents in the world.
- * A belief entertained now by a host of Christian intellectuals that Islam in spite of the weaknesses of the present-day Muslims invites to monotheism, and is an ethical force, which may be used to achieve the true balance between the science and the faiths.
- * The Muslim desire for dialogue which has been promoted by religious decrees (fatawa) issued for the first time by religious authorities, encouraging contacts with the Christian circles for developing more rapprochement and cooperation in

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launching joint projects of humanitarian relief and charities, and campaigns for defending the human rights and justice

- * Efforts have been made towards gathering intellectuals of both religions and conducting objective researches and studies on religion free of bias and bigotry

Islamic Concepts

If one's whims are left aside and the true concepts of Islam are rationally assessed, to what extent would these principles go along with the human aspirations for the universal integration, cooperation and peace?

Islam is actually an extension of the earlier monotheistic religions. It reverses the Holy Books and all Allah's Messengers. It, however, differs with them on some basic matters. These differences should be discussed in a way which hurts the sentiments of nobody. This approach could be adopted by considering and giving heed to the following aspects

- * Respect for the unity of the human race and avoiding all sorts of discrimination

- * Reaffirmation of man's dignity and acceptance of the principle of equality between man and woman with due regard to the in-born faculties of both sexes

- * Safeguarding the civil rights

and basic liberties. The concepts of freedom should not anyhow be upheld as an absolute privilege allowing sacrilegious acts against the sacred values or violation and abuse of other people's rights

- * Encouragement of studies, researches and the intellectual work. These have proved instrumental in enabling the Muslims to play a crucial role in laying the foundation of the European civilisation during the Middle Ages
- * The quest for knowledge, according to Islam, is intimately linked to the faith, which prevents the destructive scientific devices to be used against the humanity
- * The role of Muslims in building the world civilisation is acknowledged by a notable number of Western scholars. They admit that the scientific research and the intellectual analysis are closely related to Mus-

lim scholars and scientists from the early days of the modern history

Philosophy was closely associated with Islam so that it was called the Islamic philosophy. Considering Islam as an opposing system, categorically rejecting the European civilisation is, therefore, unfounded,

- * Islam is originally meant for the promotion of the cause of peace and propagation of the ideas of coexistence and tolerance. Using force, according to the Islamic injunctions, is only an exceptional means restored to for defending the cause of justice when all other option fails to fulfil the purpose,
- * Islam is a full-fledged system fundamentally revealed for securing the welfare of human being and maintaining his freedom and rights. It is true that the man-invented term of Human Rights, is not literally mentioned in the Islamic teach-



Heads of Islamic Centres and organizations working in cooperation with the Rabita seen here discussing plans to introduce Islam to non Muslim audiences

Features

ings but the very essence of the issue is carefully advocated by the Islamic rulings

- * Islam must not be judged in the light of the un-becoming practices of Muslim people or states but according to its sublime values which withstand all changeable rules and stand firm as a solid rock providing guidance whenever the will for reform gains its momentum
- * The best methods for bringing Muslims into the wide ranging involvement in the issues of world unity interaction, and cooperation lies in nurturing the Islamic values in the Muslim young generation,
- * The anti religion campaigns, which are usually organised in favour of the man-made ideologies are not conducive to any other purpose than generating more despondency and extremism
- * Hence one can say, that the true understanding of Islam would have to lead to rejection of the widely-held argument of the West that Islam is in its very essence, aggressive and extreme. Equally it will be revealed that selfish motives are the major cause of these attacks against Islam
- * If the Muslims have to be partially blamed for their present decline our friends in the West are requested to conduct objective studies for this decline to determine if this deterioration is the result of the original Muslim traditions or is only the outcome of temporary historical circumstances

Other Causes

Other causes of tension between the Muslims and the West are the result of a vicious campaign launched in the West against

Islam and the Muslims. Western media has to bear a large portion of the blame as it repeatedly hastened to link any terrorist action or violent incident to Islam and the Muslims. It is deliberately mixing up the national struggle for liberation, on the one side and the inter-factional conflict and civil wars on the other.

What is taking place in Palestine, Afghanistan, Algeria, Somalia and Sudan and events like the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York are examples of this confusion. These unjust Western reactions could be attributed to the historical background and forms part of the collective memory of the Western society. So, these accusations have unfortunately, been taken for granted accepted and without verification. This distortion has to be discussed for the purpose of defining its causes and motives. In this regard the following points have to be considered:

- 1 The tendency to link with Islam in certain cases of violence stems from geographical considerations or national affiliations but not from religious adherence. A Western observer could be excused for upholding such an attitude as he fails to define this relation because of his perception of the religion and the state as separate dominions not like Islam which does not differentiate between the religious and temporal aspects of life.
- 2 In these cases Islam has actually constituted a framework for a national bond, conglomerating the different races into one congenial unit. The Muslim population in the Indian sub-continent and the Malaysian peninsula are examples of this development.

3 Some Western quarters are politically exploiting the anti-Islam sentiments of the Western masses by repeated references to Islam as a source of threat, danger and terrorism. Such crooked logic was largely used during the Algerian revolution, the Bosnian conflict, and the Arab resistance against the Israeli occupation.

4 One has also to admit the failure of the Muslim scholars in developing a set of Islamic rulings in jurisprudence keeping pace with the speedy advance of modern Muslim states in the aftermath of the liberation. This failure could be ascribed partially to the rigidity of thinking on the part of some influential religious scholars and policies followed on the other hand deliberately by some imperialist forces for keeping the Muslim countries in a state of anxiety, conflict and instability.

5 Blame could also be laid upon the prominent Muslim religious leaders as they fell short of strongly denouncing certain acts of violence, which Islam does not approve altogether. These leaders may similarly be excused for their silence because of the difficulty in distinguishing between national liberation struggles and criminal acts of killing.

6 Some of the Muslim minorities living in the Western countries have either failed to detach themselves from the political differences and sectarian conflicts in their native lands. This failure has created more difficulties in their naturalisation and assimilation in the new habitats.

Features

Islamic Education in the United Kingdom

Necessity and Availability

Ghulamur Rahman

Read! in the name of your Lord, who has created (All that exists) Has created man from a clot Read! And your lord is most generous, who has taught by the pen Has taught man that which he knew not Al-Qur'an 96 1-5

O you who Believe! ward off from yourselves and your Families a fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones Al-Qur'an 66 6

TO fulfil this obligation, proper and most appropriate education suited to the needs of the Muslim community in particular (in any country) and the Ummah in general, is a must. In the United Kingdom under the Education Act 1944, every parent has a duty to ensure that their children receive education between the ages of 5 and 16 which means that all children must attend to a school upto the age of 16 no matter if he/she is educated

As far the Command of Allah (s w t) the notion of education is 'acquiring knowledge' whereas the question remains 'what knowledge'. Thus the objective of education should be to empower human beings through knowledge of the universal duties imposed on all individuals by the Creator the knowledge by which he/she will be well-equipped to worship Allah and thus be saved from the Fire i.e. *Fard Ayn* and then the knowledge of science and practices which are necessary for society collectively such as farming, technology medicine etc i.e. *Fard Kifaya*. To fulfil that objective, there is a need for a good education system.

So what is a good education? Preparation for the Hereafter through purely Islamic education, some people think is neither practicable nor enough to cope in this world of science and technology as the State

Schools do not teach *Fard Ayn* and Week-end and Evening Madrasas do not teach *Fard Kifaya*. Therefore, the combination of the two *Faraid* is essential.

The Muslim parents are therefore, increasingly thinking that a holistic approach to education bringing together the secular and religious education, is necessary and that full time Muslim schools are the keys to success, although religious education one lesson a week in state schools is available.

It is with that end in view that the Muslims in the UK has started to establish Islamic Schools and so far more than 50 schools some for boys and others for girls and yet some with residential hostels in addition to hundreds of week-end and evening schools or madrasas.

All schools under the current education Act require to teach National Curriculum and most Muslim schools reach reading, memorisation and understanding of Al-Qur'an a study of the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and his sayings (Ahadith) Arabic as a language, community languages, Islamic history and Islamic in put in subjects required to be taught under National Curriculum.

They also provide facilities for pupils to fulfil their religious obligations such as Salah, Fasting etc Islamic holidays single-sex education Islamic dress standards and above all a high standard of adhere (manners) between all at the schools. All these schools together are able to cater for less than one per cent of all Muslim pupils.

Although there are at present approximately 1,900 Church of England schools 1,800 Roman Catholic schools and 17 Jewish schools all being funded by the state, the state funding for Muslim schools has not yet

Features

been agreed. The Muslim community continuously demanding their right to have Muslim schools being funded by the State but unfortunately on this or that pretence the Government has so far denied to accept the request.

However, three or four Schools are expected to gain the Grant-maintained status in the near future and more may come into the fold provided Muslims are able to show that they are united and demanding for their rights collectively which is so far missing.

The names, addresses and the level of education as provided by some of these Muslim schools are appended below.

| | |
|--|---|
| Islamia Schools' Centre (Boys & Girls) 29 Salisbury Road London NW6 6RG Level: Primary & Secondary | Brondesbury College (for Boys) 8 Brondesbury Park London NW6 7BT Level: BCSE (year 11) |
| Jamea Al Kauther (Residential for Girls) Ashton Road Lancaster LA1 5AJ Level: Up to GCSE (Ages 11-16) | The King Fahd Academy Bromyard Avenue London W37HD 50/50 Male and Female Level: Primary to GCSE A Level |
| Jamia Al Karam (Boys) Eaton Hall Eaton Retford Nottinghamshire DN22 0PR Level: GCSE+ A Level in 1998 | The Islamic Institute (Boys) Inholms Gardens, Flintham Nottinghamshire NG23 5LQ Level: GCSE (Age 11 upwards) |
| Zakaria Muslim Girls High School 111 Warwick Road W. Yorkshire WF17 6AJ Level: GCSE & Post 16 GNVQ | Zakaria Muslim Girls High School for Girls Sinope Street, Batley Gloucester GL14AN Level: GCSE (Age From 7 upwards) |
| Leicester Islamic Academy 320 London Road Leicester LE2 2BJ Level: Junior (Boys/Girls) Senior Level: Girls Age 11+ | Al Muntada Islamic School 7 Bridge Place, Parsons Green London SW6 4HR Level: Primary to Age 11 |
| Fayyibah Girls School 88 Fife Avenue, Stamford Hill London N16 6JJ Level: GCSE | Islamic College (Darul Ummah) 56 Bigland Street London E12NG Level: GCSE |
| Manchester Islamic High School for Girls 55 High Lane, Chorlton Manchester M21 9FA Level: Secondary (11-16 age group) | The Foundation for Islamic Education London NW6 7YG Level: Nursery/Reception year 1 and 2 |
| Manchester Muslim Preparatory School 551 Wilmslow Road, Withington Manchester M20 4BA Level: Age 3-11 | Muslim Girls School Rochdale SAFARA 104 Spotland Road Rochdale OL12 6PJ Level: Up to GCSE |
| Jamia Al Huda (Islamic Residential College) for Girls Berkley Avenue, Mapperly Park Nottingham NG3 5AF Level: GCSE & A Level | Iqra Independent School for Girls 35 Gresham Road London SW9 7PH Level: GCSE |

Hijaz College
Witling Street
Nuneaton CV11 8BE
Level: GCSE (A)
Level: (Residential)

Al Hiyrah Islamic School
Midland House, Hob Moor Road
Small Heath
Birmingham B10 9A
Level: GCSE

The Degree and Post Graduate (or Research Fellowships) Courses in Islamic Studies are available in the UK in various Universities and College. The names and addresses of some of them are listed below.

| | |
|--|--|
| Cambridge University The Old Schools Cambridge CB2 1TT | Arabic Language Religious Studies Research |
| University of Oxford the Oriental Institute Pusey Lane Oxford OX1 2LE | Arabic includes a year at the University of Alexandria Arabic with Islamic Art and Archaeology Arabic with Islamic Studies/History and Arabic with Modern Middle Eastern Studies |
| Oxford Academy for Advanced Studies 193 Cowley Road Oxford OX4 1UT | A Post Graduate Research Institution for advancing research in the fields of Arabic and Islamic Studies |
| University of Durham Old Shire Hall Durham DH1 3HP | Arabic with Anthropology with Economics with Europe in Languages with Mid East & Islamic Studies with Politics and with sociology and Social Policy |
| University of Exeter The University Exeter Devon EX4 4QJ | Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies Centre for Arabic and Islamic Studies |
| The University of Wales Lampeter Dyfed SA48 7ED | Islamic Studies |
| University of Leeds The University Leeds LS2 9JT | Arabic and Islamic Studies Arabic Classical Literature Arabic Most European Languages Arabic Religious Studies Politics and Management Studies |
| Birkbeck College University of London 26 Russell Square London WC1B 5DQ | Certificate and Diploma in Islamic Studies |
| University of Salford Salford MS 4WT | Arabic with European Language |
| School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London) Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square London WC1H 0XG | Arabic Language Arabic and Islamic Studies |
| University of St Andrews College Gate St Andrews KY16 9AH | Arabic Language Arabic with a Year Abroad |
| University of Westminster 15-18 Metford House Clipstone Street London W1M 8JS | Arabic Linguistic/English |
| University of Edinburgh David Hume Tower George Square Edinburgh EH8 9JX | Religious Studies Comparative Religious |

Muslim World League, London Office, will be happy to assist any overseas student enquiring about the availability of intended courses in British institutions.

Features

Depression

Prevention & Cure

Dr Ahmad H Sakr

PEOPLE pass through a state of emotions in their life. Sometimes the emotions could be feelings of sadness, hopelessness, pessimism, and a general loss of interest in life. Sometimes these types of feelings might be combined with a sense of reduced emotional well-being. Many people pass through this type of depression in life. It is considered normal. No one should consider it to be abnormal.

Life on this planet is full of tests and turmoils. No one is exempted. All are to be tested at different times, with different types of tests and with different levels too. The more a person has a strong faith, the more he is to be tested. However, when Allah tests someone, He also helps him to overcome such types of tests.

As far as testing for the believers, Allah says in Surah *Al-Ankaboot* (The Spider) the following:

ALM Do people think that they will be left alone on saying We believe and that they will not be tested? We did test those before them and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false (29:1-3)

It should be stated here that there are many types of tests that

lead to Depression. Allah through His Wisdom knows exactly what type of test each person should have. In Surah *Al-Baqarah* (The Cow), Allah says the following:

Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods, lives and the fruits of your toil but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. Who say when afflicted with calamity: To Allah we belong and to Him is our return. They are those on whom descend blessings from their Lord and Mercy. And they are the ones that receive guidance (2:155-157)

In this chapter the author shall present some of the major causes of Depression, Symptoms, Incidence, Prevention, Healing, and Final Remarks. The approach to be taken is from scientific and spiritual approaches. Combining these two methods simultaneously shall prove to be more effective in healing many people without having side effects.

This information shall be of great help to psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, medical doctors and nurses, as well as the patients themselves and any group of scientists who are involved in health.

Causes

There could be a whole series of factors that may cause or lead to Depression. These may be classified into the following causes:

1 Biological Causes Under this section there is a good number of factors that may cause Depression. Some of which would be physical illness, or the use of drugs such as birth control or sleeping pills. It could be genetic factors that a person inherited, or even hormonal changes that takes place for the teenagers, or the women during and after their menopausal state of their lives.

2 Social Problems Many teenagers feel lonely if both parents are working. They feel miserable and left behind. They try to join any group to be accepted. Such groups could be gangs and drug pushers. They may drink and smoke, attend parties so as to reduce the pressure of loneliness.

The other segment of the society are the senior citizens. They are sent to senior citizen homes. They feel they are lonely, and as if they are unwanted in the society. They end up in a state of Depression.

3 Psychological Factors These factors are many to be counted or to be enumerated. A child who lost his mother or father

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Those, who contemplate the wonders of creation in the heaven and the earth like these beautiful flowers discover Allah's signs in them. Meditation and contemplation on the daily basis alleviates depression.

might end up in having Depression. On the other hand if a child has been abused by either or both parents he will develop a state of negative feelings that may lead to Depression. Single parenthood is one of the major psychological causes for Depression. Most of those adopted children are depressed after they recognize that their adopted parents are not the true biological parents.

4 Spiritual Factors All those who do not practice their spiritual obligations will undoubtedly bring

Depression to themselves. People are not machines. They must have time for their spiritual needs. Otherwise they will end up in a state of Depression. For Muslims they are to pray daily five times, and attend Friday prayers in a congregation at a mosque. The lack of spiritual practices on a daily basis will lead to Depression. Allah says in Surah Taha the following:

But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down and We shall raise him up

blind on the Day of Judgment
(20:124)

5 Ghosts There are living creatures other than human beings that we cannot see. These are angels and jinns. Angels are made out of light while jinns are made out of fire. Some jinns are good while others are bad. The latter ones might be called as *Satans*, demons, devils or ghosts. These are the ones that harm human beings.

Those people who are weak in their faith and those who do not practice the spiritual teachings of Islam are liable to be targets to the devils. Jinns may possess people, haunt them and may show them nightmares. Such group of people pass through stages of Depression and Hallucination.

Any person who refuses to remember Allah, Satan will chain him down and/or possess him. In Surah Zukhruf (Ornamentation), Allah says the following:

If anyone withdraws himself from remembrance of The Most Gracious, We appoint for him a Satan to be an intimate companion to him (43:36)

Symptoms

There are a variety of symptoms that might be related to Depression. The following is a partial list:

- 1 Anxiety
- 2 Variety of moods or mood swings from crying to laughing
- 3 Loss of appetite
- 4 Loss of sleep
- 5 Loss of social activities
- 6 Tiredness
- 7 Loss of concentration
- 8 Hallucination or Delusions
- 9 Withdrawn and huddled in bed
- 10 Suicide
- 11 Listlessness

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Prevention

There are many ways by which one prevents himself from falling into the state of Depression. By knowing the causes that lead to Depression then it would be easy to prevent oneself from being attacked by Depression. The following is a partial list

- 1 Avoid loneliness
- 2 Have a hope and vision for a better future
- 3 Remember stories of Prophets and Messengers
- 4 You are to be tested by Allah so as to increase your rewards
- 5 Try to acquire patience, double patience, steadfast and Taqwa so that you will succeed in this world and the hereafter. In this respect Allah says in Surah Al Imran the following

O you who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance. Strengthen each other and fear Allah that you may prosper (3:200)

- 6 Meditation and contemplation are essential to be done on a daily basis. Allah praised those who practice these qualities. In Surah Al Imran Allah says the following

Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day there are indeed Signs for people of understanding. People who remember Allah standing, sitting and lying down on their sides and contemplate the wonders of creation in the heaven and the earth with the saying: 'Our Lord, not for naught has You created all this! Glory to You! Give us salvation from the chastisement of the fire' (3:190-191)

- 7 Daily salat and Du'a are a must
- 8 Reciting the Qur'an and listening to Qur'an are recommended to practice daily. It should be stated here that in order not to have Depression one has to recite Qur'an on a daily basis and especially in the morning. Allah says in Surah Al Israa (Night Journey) the following

When you do read the Qur'an seek Allah's protection from Satan the Rejected One (16:98)

However in Surah Al Ar'af (The Heights) Allah says the following

When the Qur'an is read listen to it with attention and hold your peace that you may receive Mercy (7:204)

- 9 Try to prolong Sujood (prostration) so as to get rid of depression
- 10 Eat right foods. Fresh fruits and vegetables to be consumed daily with every meal
- 11 Exercise daily. Be moderate
- 12 Avoid addiction: drinking alcohol, smoking, gambling, pornography, dancing, etc.
- 13 Keep smiling. This act brings peace and happiness to you and to all those around you
- 14 Keep in touch with Allah as much as you can. The remembrance of Allah prevents Depression. Allah says in Surah Al Ra'ad (Thunder) the following

Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction (13:28)

Healing

To cure a person from Depression is not easy unless one can diagnose the causes as well as the severity of the state of Depression. However, here is a general and a partial list of methods to cure Depression

- 1 Group therapy. Try to practice daily Salat in a Jama'ah as well as Friday Salat in a mosque
- 2 Improve your spirituality. Meditation, Tahajjud, Qiyam al-layl, salat of Hajjah, Istikhara, Du'a and other types of spirituality
- 3 Increase your Sujood and try to prolong it
- 4 Perform Umra and Hajj to the city of Makkah and the sacred places and enjoy the spirituality of the rituals
- 5 If addicted to smoking, drinking and drugs, try to fast. Fasting reduces your urge to these vices
- 6 Remember those less fortunate people in different parts of the world. You will feel less worried
- 7 Visit cemeteries, hospitals, prisons,

refugee camps and the homeless

- 8 Prepare yourself for the big journey to leave this world and to go to the other world. The more you think of death and the life of the Hereafter, the less you would be worried and the less you will go through Depression. Even if you are depressed, you will get rid of it.

Final Remarks

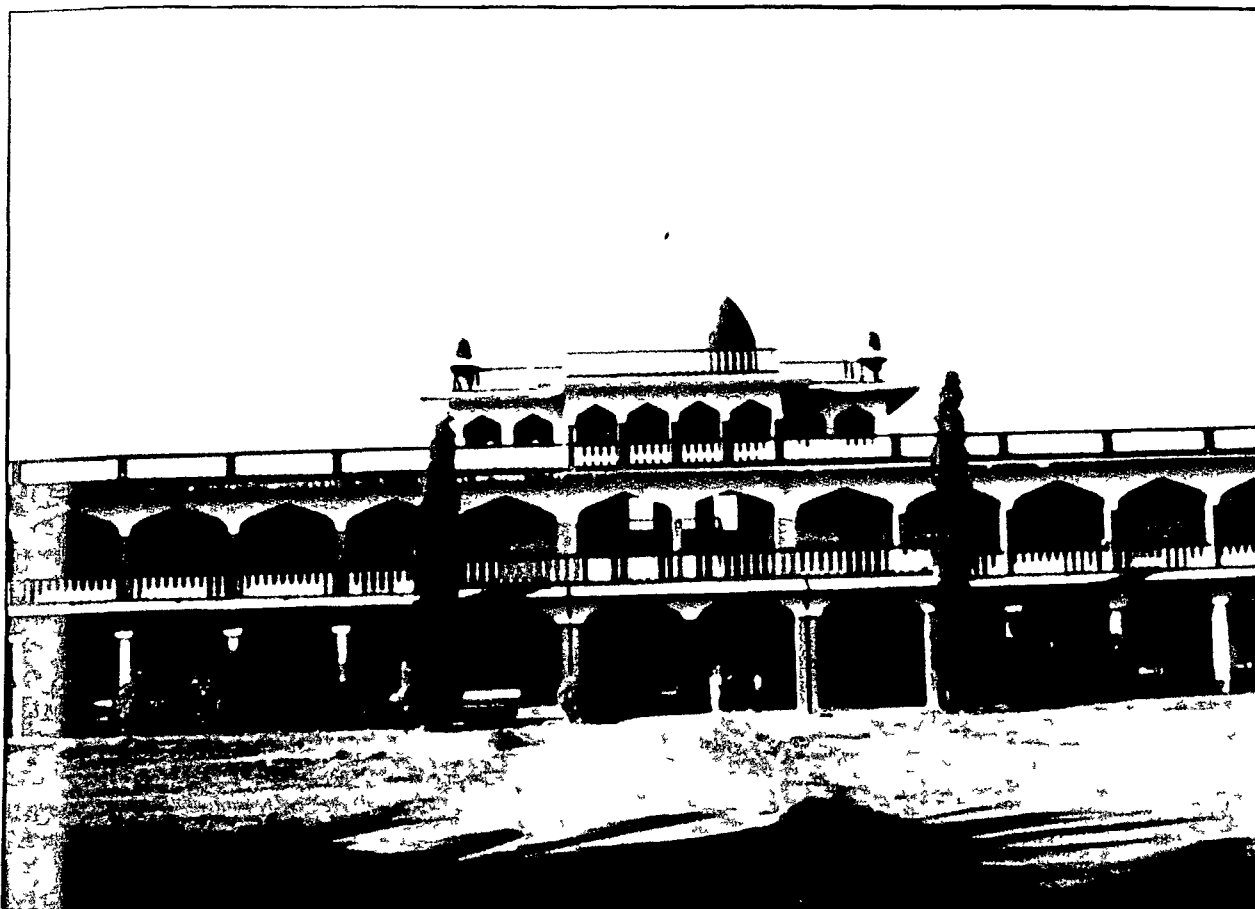
Depression is a universal disease that affects millions of people. Some 10-15% of people suffer from it at some point in their lives. The incidence of Depression increases with age. This could be due to physical illness, reduced mental capacity and social isolation.

The incidence of Depression appears to be more in women. It is about 1/6 seeking help while in men it is 1/9. This may be true or it is due to the fact that women are more prepared to visit physicians while men may resort to alcohol, discontent or violence.

One has to remember that life is short. Try to enjoy it in the right way. The above methods of prevention and healing, if used properly, will keep people happy, healthy and strong. To live in peace and harmony one has to recognize that the Healer is Allah Himself. If people follow His rules and regulations, they will definitely live a happy life here and in the Hereafter. All that it takes is a commitment on the part of the individual to do what Allah has prescribed in the Qur'an and what the Prophet (peace be on him) explained in his Ahadith. It should be stated here what Allah said in Qur'an in Surah Al Israa (Night Journey) the following

We sent down stage by stage of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe. To the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss (17:82)

Features



Jamia Islamia in Bhatkal one of the best Arabic colleges in South India

A Small Muslim Town on India's West Coast

Fozail Aqdas Ghazali

GOLDEN sandy beach extends till the eyes or binoculars can zero in. Numerous varieties of shells, star fish and small fishing boats are found throughout the stretch. Powerful beam of the light house scans the horizon and the Arabian Sea guiding the ships

and yachts. Two major ports of India, Mangalore and Karwar (with naval base) are on either side of Bhatkal at a distance of 90 and 78 km each.

Though Bhatkal had deep sea and topography for an ideal port and the Britishers had planned to build one in 1928 with a railway

line, the Politics in the district head quarters deprived it of its right after independence. But before the end of this century the Kokan Railway will link it with these cities and further to Bombay and Tiruvandrum.

Bhatkal is a town of 40,000 people. Majority of them are Mus-

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lms who are known as Navayaths, originally the sailors. They are now a thriving business community spread throughout the length and breadth of India, i.e. from Calcutta to Bombay, Hyderabad and Madras to Cochin. Many of them are flocking to Bangalore.

Navayaths own coffee plantations in Coorg to Tata Iron and Steel Agencies in Cochin. In Madras they monopolise the business of famous Maulana lungis and in Mysore they are the business leaders in Mysore silk. Now many Bhatkalis are entering into real estate business. A few of them are in share markets and small scale industries too.

Bhatkalis also bring a lot of foreign exchange to the country from Los Angeles, California's KFC chains of restaurants, the Gulf, Europe, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan. There are highly qualified doctors in Detroit, US, UK and in the Gulf. Among Bhatkalis there are also engineers, chartered accountants and all kinds of skilled workers to chefs of five-star hotels.

In Bhatkal there is an institution, well-known as Anjuman Hami-e-Muslimeen established in 1919 by dedicated and devout Muslims like the first graduate of the district, Khan Bahadur. Now this Anjuman runs an engineering college, a degree college, a junior girls college, the Islamia High School for boys, a high school for girls and primary and nursery schools. It plans to start vocational training institutions soon. There are two more Muslim high schools — Shams School and Naunihal School.

Among the famous people from Bhatkal is late Abdul Qadir Hafizka, who served as the am-

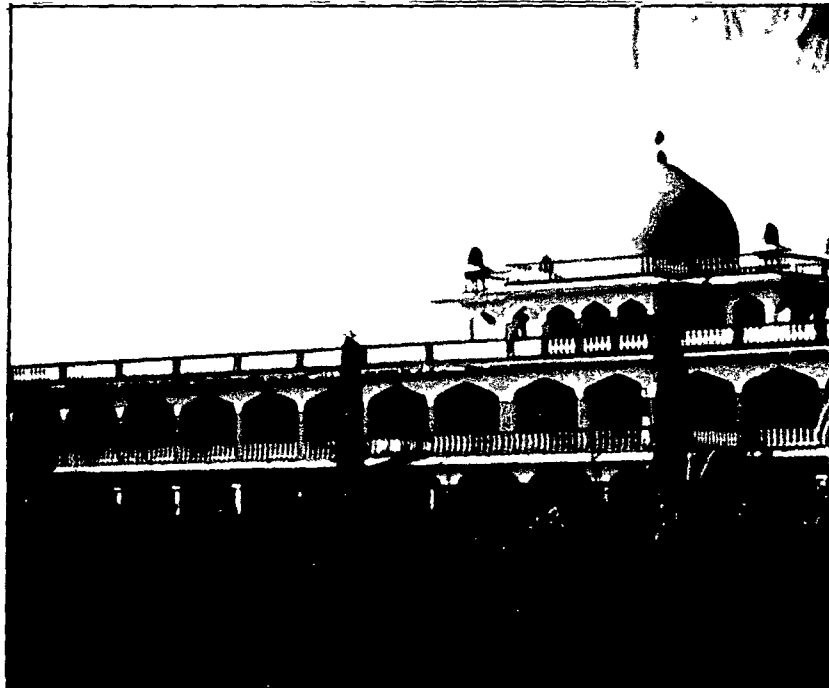
bassador to Saudi Arabia in late 1970s and 80's and before that president of the Bombay Congress Committee. Late J.H. Shamsuddin was deputy finance and electricity minister in Karnataka in 1950s and early 60's. The people of Karnataka still remember him for his sincerity in work and helping nature and above all his regularity in salah (prayers). During his time, roads were asphalted and electricity was brought to Bhatkal. In later generation S.M. Yahya became the youngest finance minister of Karnataka besides holding portfolios of Education, Excise and Labour, Ports and Wakfs etc.

Religious education is a must for every Bhatkali. In olden days Madrasas were popular. Also Islamic theology is a compulsory subject in schools and is taught by the religious scholars like Sharief Mohiuddin Akrami and other scholars of Islamic studies. At that time Bhatkalis had gone to the Azhar University in Egypt and recently to Damascus and Morocco.

A few of them also go to the Islamic University of Madinah.

Young boys have won prizes at Qirat competition in India, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia. Bhatkalis were earlier proud of going to Aligarh for higher studies and later to UK and US and Russia. Now Bhatkal has one of the best Arabic colleges in South India, Jamia Islamia established in 1962 and Shaikh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, the patron of this college, visits the town regularly. Jamiatul Salihat is the Arabic college for women.

Navayaths are Shafis. There are many Navayaths around Bhatkal along the coast line from Basrur to Samsi. They are very religious, fond of mosques and madrasas, and cordial in nature. They have very good relations with the non-Muslim communities of the town — the Hindus and the Christians. In early days the commodities like fish, milk, vegetables and other necessities of daily usage were vendored more by the Hindu



Another view of the Jamia Islamiah in Bhatkal

Features



The Bhatkal Fisheries harbour. Rice and fish are the staple food of the people of Bhatkal

and the Christian communities than Muslims

Muslim fraternity used to give economic support to these communities by purchasing from them. The masons and tailors mostly came from Christian community. The labourers came from all communities. The Navayaths are fond of building good houses and bungalows, so every trade thrives in this town. Masons, carpenters, plumbers, electricians and house servants are in full demand.

Navayaths are among those few communities in India that do not demand dowry from the father of the bride. Girls are not considered as burden by the parents. Education, household craft, good family background are the criteria for selection in marriage. Navayaths are a well knit lot. They are together in joy and sorrow. A child must learn how to recite the Qur'an first, then go to the school. There are Madrisas for memorising the Qur'an (Huffaz) also. So there are many memorisers of the

Qur'an (Huffaz) among males and females. During the fasting month of Ramadhan, male Huffaz lead prayers in every mosque (around 50) of the city.

Hijab (Islamic veil) is observed from ages in this town, so one cannot see Muslim women without veils. For women going to markets, unnecessarily, is considered shameful.

The Navayaths pay their Zakah regularly. Earlier every beggar and juggler used to flock to Bhatkal. Now the Muslims have unearthed the rackets of helping undeserving people. So there is Baitul Maal and needy individuals like poor widows, orphans, poor old men and handicapped people are provided with sufficient assistance so that they can fulfil their basic needs or start small business to lessen their adversities.

Earlier Navayaths possessed farm lands. But the government policy of land to the tiller deprived them of these lands. Co-

conut, mango, jackfruit, papaya and pineapple are now developed with the assistance from the provincial Horticultural Department. Arecanut gardens are also found in this fertile land of Bhatkal.

India's biggest and probably world's third highest (approximately 900 feet) Jog Falls is just 45 km away from Bhatkal. The hydroelectric project provides electricity not only to the Karwar district but to the major part of the Karnataka state. Jog is an international tourist spot.

Fish and par-boiled rice are the staple food of Bhatkalis. Salmon, seer cod, river fishes, prawn, shrimps and sea-food like freshwater mussels, rock-flesh and mushrooms are abundant. Vegetables and greens are must with every meal. Bhatkalis have good culinary taste. The varieties of breakfast are too many: Puttu (rice cakes), appo (pancakes of jaggery, feaugreek etc.), kheers and polis (cakes of breads), samoli (a kind of wheat flour) and rice with greens, sea food, jackfruit are very delicious. Bhatkali biryani is also popular and of all their hospitality is well-known.

The centuries-long Hindu-Muslim harmony was shattered a few years ago when the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) leaders started spoiling the atmosphere of goodwill. Uma Bharathi's cassettes hurling abuses on Islam and Muslims that too near a mosque at the time of Salah and later during Hindu festivals, communal sentiments. These incidents resulted in anti-Muslim riots. The BJP indulges in these gimmicks for political gains. The situation is tense but under control. However, it gets out of control when a Hindu festival is celebrated or elections for the provincial assembly or the parliament are held.

Features

Muslim Scientists**Al-Jahiz:****An 8th Century Islamic Zoologist****Abdur Rahman Sharif**

A genius with many facets Al-Jahiz is remembered today mainly as a zoologist. He may right be considered the most notable zoologist the world produced in 1,200 years from the first to the 13th Century AD, and the most important link between Aristotle (d 322 BC) and Buffon (d 1788 CE).

His voluminous *Kitab al-Hayawan* (Book of Animals) is one of the great books in the history of zoology. Some of the noteworthy features of Al-Jahiz's zoology are evolution of species, influence of environment and climate on animal life, migration of animals, language of animals, and animal psychology. These concepts were developed only in the nineteenth century in Europe almost a thousand years after him.

Al-Jahiz also studied two of the fundamental biological problems - the struggle for survival and adaption. He was perhaps the first scientist to study the changes in animal life brought about by change in environment.

Between the first and the thirteenth century zoology was essentially an Islamic science with the Arabs making the greatest contribution and Al-Jahiz towering them all. After the second century zoology, like other sciences, died

an unnatural death as Christianity did not favour the inquiring spirit of man.

The study of sciences was revived in the seventh century by Islam with its unique emphasis on knowledge resulting in the creation of the then most educated society in the world. While in Europe only a few monks could read and write, the streets of the Islamic world were teeming with educated men and women.

In Islam the study of zoology is an extension of religious thought which provided an added impetus to the believer to study animal life. A Muslim sees in every animal, in every living organism, the manifestation of the creative genius of Allah through the study of the animals one sought to demonstrate the existence of the Creator and his divine wisdom, observed Al-Jahiz.

Some of the passages in the *Kitab al-Hayawan* like those relating to the language of ants, or migration of fish in the Dylah (the Tigris) could be the envy of any modern zoologist.

'Ant will approach a dead locust and try to turn and move it to draw it away, and to pull it. When it is unable in spite of all its efforts to transport it, it returns to its home

And the observer will see that it comes back after a short interval, followed like a black thread by a line of its comrades. Then they help one another to move the locust.

'How does a man know that it is the same ant, which first tried unsuccessfully to move the locust, informed its comrades and returned at their head? Our experience tells so. Always when we observed an ant, which failed in its attempt to move a locust, we saw it return with such a following as described. And even if we are unable to distinguish it with our eyes from its comrades, our explanation is the only plausible one. We never saw an ant returning to its home, either with or without a load, which did not stop to communicate with another ant on its way. This shows that the first ant, while returning from its unsuccessful attempt, served as a guide to its comrades.'

One of the fundamentals of biology is classification of animals and plants, the history of which can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. The subject caught Al-Jahiz's attention too, but he rejected Aristotle's system and worked out his own.

Al-Jahiz divided the whole sys-

Features

tem of creation into two broad categories inorganic (*jamad*) and organic (*hamin*) further dividing the organic into two kingdoms - *Hayawan* (animal) and *Nabat* (plant)

The animal kingdom is in turn sub-divided into four types according to their style of locomotion (1) *Yamshi* walking/running animals (2) *ma vatu* flying animals (3) *mavasbah* swimming animals and (4) *ma vansah* crawling animals

Under the first category of walking/running animals he included man (*nas*) non-carnivorous quadrupeds (*bahaim*) both domestic and wild fierce animals (*siba*)/carnivores both domestic and wild and wingless insects (*hasharat*) He made a distinction between carnivorous and herbivorous animals and between dogs and cats The flying animals were further divided into (1) carnivores (*siba*) - eagles vultures (2) defenceless birds and (3) small birds/insects

Al-Jahiz rejected the division of useful and harmful animals as, he opined every animal even the one harmful to man had its place and usefulness in the scheme of creation

As a true scientist he did not blindly accept his predecessors though he held them in great esteem He conducted his own research and experiments and formulated new theories and judgements Among his scientific experiments mention

may be made of the one conducted to study the effects of intoxication on animals

Al-Jahiz recognized the unity of nature and the relationship between groups of organism His concept of the basic unity of all living organisms was not merely a metaphysical postulation but a scientific reality which our present-day science, with its cell and DNA theories has confirmed Today we know that all organisms from man to slime regardless of their diversity of form have a common biological and chemical composition and are constituted of the same basic units

called cells *Kitab al Hayawan* is a monumental work in seven volumes and yet unfinished It deals with 350 animals, including large mammals birds and insects

It contains descriptions of animals along with information known to the Arabs But it does not cover all the animals known to Al-Jahiz or the Arabs of his time About 1,000 animals are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an the Hadiths and Arabic literature

A wide range of topics relating to the life and behaviour of animals is considered both from theological and scientific points of view It is a mine of information



The camel the proverbial ship of the desert is a very useful animal According to Al Jahiz every animal has its place and usefulness in the scheme of creation

Features



An insect found usually in the Far East and other regions. Al-Jahiz's work deals with 350 animals including large mammals, birds, and insects.

on zoology. Though it draws upon the earlier zoological knowledge particularly of Aristotle, it is nevertheless an original work. As Al-Jahiz himself observed in the *Kitab al-Hayawan*, he had no need to take recourse to Aristotle, as practically everything that was known to Aristotle, was already known to the Arab bedouin.

The book had a great influence on all later Islamic writers on the subject. Parts of it were rendered into English and other European languages. Al-Jahiz continues to be studied by scholars around the world.

Abu Usman Amr bin Bahr bin Mahboob Al-Jahiz was born in al-Basrah in present-day Iraq in 160 AH/776 CE. His family, belonging to the Banu Kinana tribe of Ethiopia, had migrated to al-Basrah in earlier times. The culture and the intellectual atmosphere of al-Basrah sharpened his spirit of inquiry while, later, the universal milieu of Baghdad shaped his rational and wider vision.

Not much is known about his childhood and parentage, and practically nothing about his family life. From the beginning he had an insatiable yen for learning.

During the reign of the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mamun, he moved to the capital Baghdad and from there to Samarra for a while when the court shifted to Samarra.

Towards the end of his life Al-Jahiz suffered from hemiplegia (partial paralysis) and returned to his home town Basra where he died in Muharram 255 AH/Dec-Jan 868-869 CE at the ripe age of over 90 Islamic years.

Physically he was an ugly person. Al-Jahiz, meaning 'goggle-eyed', was his sobriquet which originated in the malformation of his eyes. Renowned Islamic biographer Ibn Khallikan of *Wafayat al-ayan* has noted that Al-Jahiz was rejected as a tutor to the children of caliph al-Mutawakkil on account of his ugliness.

An ardent seeker of knowledge, not only did he read tire-

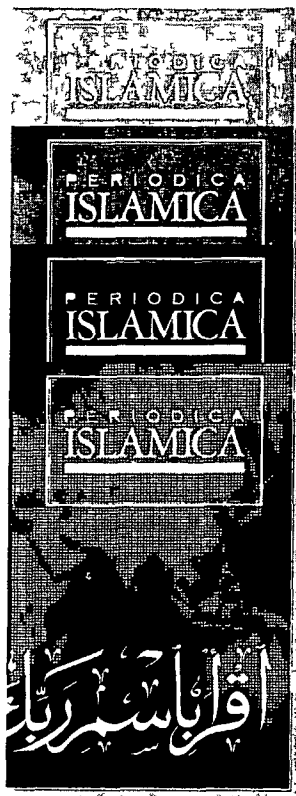
lessly, but sought oral information from all classes of people that he came in contact with. Abu Hufan observed that, as he did not know of any other person more keenly devoted to learning than Al-Jahiz, Al-Mass'uth, though critical of him in some respects, said that before or since, none excelled Al-Jahiz in literary prowess.

He earned his living through teaching, writing, and working as a scribe. He received contributions from his rich patrons to whom he dedicated his works. The chief Qazi of Baghdad, Ahmed bin Abi Daud (d. 240 AH/854 AD) was among his patrons. Al-Jahiz dedicated his book *Al-Bayan wa'l-Tyabiyin* and addressed several *risalas* to him.

Al-Jahiz was as prodigious a writer as voracious a reader. He started his literary career before the age of 40 in Basrah itself and produced a remarkable corpus of works. Historians have listed over 200 works by him, about 80 of which, including 30 of them in their entirety, have come down to us to reveal his protean genius. His works relate to a mind-boggling array of subjects like linguistics, literature, philosophy, theology, anthropology, zoology, medicine, mineralogy, botany, dietary geography and sociology. He was a true polygraph.

Al-Jahiz's ceaseless craving for reading, which shaped his greatness, also caused his death. A later writer observed that he met a true bibliophile's death in his library at Basrah, when a huge stack of books crashed upon and crushed him to death as he was weak, over 90, and half paralytic. Lesser mortals weave such apocryphal stories only to enhance the glory of the great.

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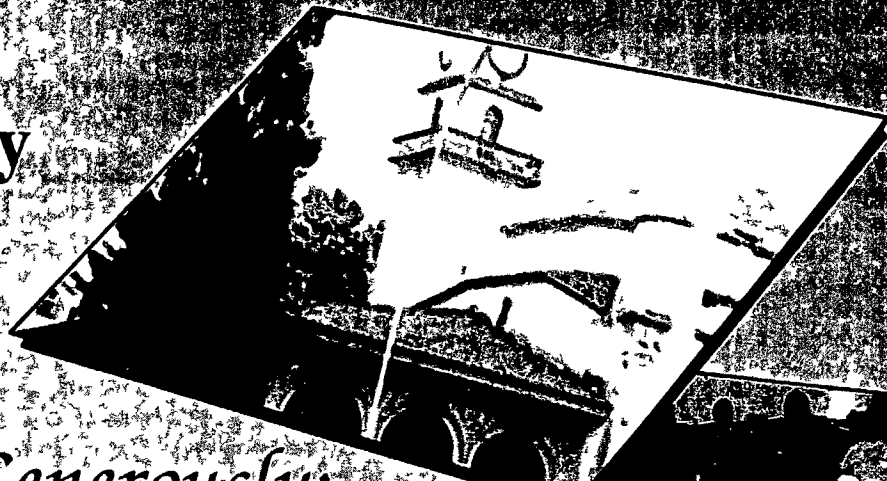
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